

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, NI
SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BOYCOTT CLASSES

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.
SUMMARY: STUDENTS AT MANY UNIVERSITIES ARE BOYCOTTING
CLASSES IN PROTEST AGAINST RECENT GOVERNMENT INCREASES
IN ROOM AND BOARD FEES. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES
AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF LAGOS, IBADAN, IFE, ILORIN,
AND BENIN HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED AS A RESULT OF STUDENT
BOYCOTTS. THE STUDENTS ARE PROTESTING AGAINST THE
RECENT DECISION OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION
(NUC) TO INCREASE BOARD AND ROOM FEES AT ALL
UNIVERSITIES. STUDENTS ARE NOW EXPECTED TO PAY THE
EQUIVALENT OF 600 DOLLARS FOR FOOD AND 130 DOLLARS
FOR LODGING PER YEAR. THE BOYCOTTS ARE APPARENTLY
THE RESULT OF A DECISION TAKEN AT A NATIONAL UNION
OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NUNS) MEETING IN CALABAR LAST
WEEK.

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2. IN ANNOUNCING THE FEE INCREASE, NUC EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY DR. JIBRIL AMINU SAID THAT THE CHARGES WERE
NECESSARY BECAUSE THE FMG NEEDED TO ALLOCATE AVAILABLE
EDUCATIONAL FUNDS TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.
NUC ADDED THAT THE CHARGES COULD HAVE BEEN HIGHER
BUT WERE REDUCED IN "DEEP CONSIDERATION FOR THE PLIGHT
OF THE AVERAGE NIGERIAN STUDENT AND FAMILY."

3. DEMONSTRATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE NUC ACTION BEGAN ON APRIL 17 AT THE UNIVERISTY OF LAGOS (UNILAG) WHEN NUNS INSTITUTED A BOYCOTT OF CLASSES. UNILAG NUNS PRESIDENT OLADUNJOYE OLADITAN SAID THAT THE ACTION WAS FORCED UPON NUNS AFTER "FRUTITLESS CONSULTATION WITH THE FMG." STUDENT LEADERS INSISTED THAT THZMACTION WOULD BE PEACEFUL BUT PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THAT SOME STUDENTS HAD BEEN COERCED INTO LEAVING CLASSES AND LIBRARY FACILITIES. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE REPORTS THE OTHER STUDENTS ARE ORGANIZING TO OPPOSE THE BOYCOTT. NIGERIA POLICE FORCE ISSUED A STATEMENT WARNING THE STUDENTS TO CONFINE THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROCESSIONS TO THE CAMPUS.

4. OTHER PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE THE STUDENTS AT IBADAN, IFE, ILORIN, BENIN HAVE JOINED THE PROTEST. APRIL 18 DAILY TIMES REPORTED THAT PLACARD-CARRYING STUDENTS MARCHED AT IBADAN WHILE IFE STDETS GATHERED AT THE UNIVERSITY'S SPORTS CENTERIN A RALLY AGAINST THE NEW FEES. NIGERIAN OBSERVER REPORTS A BOYCOTT IN EFFECT AT BENIN. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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5. COMMENT: UNILAG HAS APPARENTLY COME TO A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STANDSTILL AS A RESULT OF THE BOYCOTT. EMBOFF ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE CAMPUS THIS MORNING FOUND THE ENTRANCES BLOCKED BY POLICE WITH LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF REGULAR POLICE AND MOBILE FORCE POLICE IN EVIDENCE IN THE AREA. OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCES, STUDENTS WERE HANDING OUT WELL PRINTED NUNS LEAFLETS. THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE WAS TENSE WITH THE OBVIOUS POSSIBILITY OF A STUDENT-POLICE CONFRONTATION. END COMMENT. WYMAN

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